

To the Appropriations Committee of the Connecticut State Legislature  
Re: Dissolution of the Children's Trust Fund under the Governor's Budget  
February 18, 2009

Testimony in support of the Connecticut Children's Trust Fund

Dear Honorable Senators and Representatives,

My name is Elizabeth Farkas, I am a resident of Middlefield, Ct. I am writing this testimony in support of the Connecticut Children's Trust Fund and the preventive work they do every day with the families and children throughout Connecticut.

I have worked with various programs funded by the Children's Trust Fund in a variety of roles throughout my career. During that time I have seen the invaluable contribution that the Children's Trust Fund has been able to provide to the families and children that I have worked with. Families have expressed to me their comfort and willingness to participate in programs offered by the Children's Trust Fund, and I fear that by placing programs funded by the Children's Trust Fund under the Department of Children and Families you will disrupt the sense of trust and comfort that our families feel.

Currently I am the Clinical Supervisor of the Family-School Connection site at Bielefield Elementary School in Middletown, Ct. All of the five Family-School Connection sites throughout Connecticut are funded by the Children's Trust Fund. The goal of our program is to help promote overall student achievement through providing parents of school age children with resources such as home visiting services, support, advocacy and parenting skills.

In my course of speaking with parents about our program, I have found that one of the most comforting statements that I can make is that we are not associated with the Department of Children and Families. Please do not misunderstand me in thinking that I do not agree with the purpose and activities of the Department of Children and Families. I find that the Department of Children and Families serves a vital role in maintaining the safety and security of children in Connecticut. I as a provider see the valuable contribution that the Department of Children and Families makes to families every day. The point that I am trying to make is that many of the families that I currently work with and have worked with in the past see the Department of Children and Families as a punitive agency and one they would rather not be involved with, if they had the choice.

I fear that by moving the Family-School Connection, the Nurturing Families Network and other programs currently funded by the Children's Trust Fund to the Department of Children and Families we will lose that valuable trust that families have developed with us due to the previously perceived feelings towards the Department of Children and Families.

The Connecticut Children's Trust Fund is the only state agency in Connecticut that works solely for the prevention of child abuse and neglect. For this reason, I feel that you will send a profound message to the families and children of Connecticut if the Children's Trust Fund is dissolved – a message that the prevention of child abuse and neglect is not a vital part in the success of our society.

I urge you to send the message to the families and children of Connecticut that you do see the importance of this invaluable state agency – the Children's Trust Fund. Send the message that the prevention of child abuse and neglect is vital in the success and growth of our society. Send the message to the families and children of Connecticut that you, as legislators, are committed to providing them with the most valuable resources to promote their families' success. Choose to support the Connecticut Children's Trust Fund in continuing to be the lead agency in preventing child abuse and neglect in our great state of Connecticut.

Thank you,

Elizabeth M. Farkas, LCSW  
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